

Subject to revision before first class.

**SYLLABUS: POL 336H**  
**ONTARIO POLITICS**  
**Monday, Wednesdays 6-8 PM**

**Instructor:** Dr. Joshua Hjartarson  
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**Office Hours** 8-9:00 pm Wednesdays

**REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

Issue note (2-3 pages)	15%	<b>Due:</b> May 30
Options note (7-9 pages)	45%	June 20
Exam (2 hr)	40%	Examination period

*Note: assignments to be handed in at the beginning of class on due date*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course assumes some familiarity with the key features of Canada’s political system. The first half of the course focuses on the institutional and socio-economic setting in which the Government of Ontario functions. The second focuses on key public policy challenges facing the province, with a frank dialogue of the opportunities and challenges confronting decision-makers.

We will have 3 or 4 distinguished guests join our class for specific topic areas of discussion. The course is intended to be highly interactive.

Key questions that students should be able answer by the end of the course include:

- What are the key policy challenges confronting Ontario? What are some options for addressing these challenges?
- What institutional, social and economic obstacles and opportunities exist that facilitate/hinder governments in meeting these challenges?
- What is Ontario’s role in the federation? How has Ontario’s role evolved?

There are two, *cumulative* assignments for this class. The goal of the assignments is to provide students an opportunity to think about/examine in detail a policy problem that interests them and is pertinent to Ontario’s current public policy context,

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### **ASSIGNMENT 1: ISSUE NOTE (2-3 PAGES)**

There will be two writing assignments in this course. Remember that they are cumulative. The first is an “Issue Note” to a Minister of Cabinet on a policy problem of your choice. An issue note is an attempt to concisely explain to a Minister the scope and nature of a particular issue that is in the news or is an emerging controversy. For example:

- Ontario’s elections are now on fixed dates. Has this improved the quality of democracy in the province?
- How does Ontario plan to eliminate its deficit? Is the plan sufficient?
- What support exists to help Ontario’s unemployed get re-training? Are these supports adequate?
- Are Ontario’s taxes competitive?
- How much is the government spending on health care? What is the projected growth of these costs?
- Is Ontario’s university system sufficiently funded?
- How do Ontarians feel about the province’s place in the federation? Is it being treated fairly by the federal government?
- What is Ontario doing to help immigrants succeed? Is it enough?
- What are the rules governing donations to political parties? Are they fair?
- What is Ontario doing to combat climate change? Is it enough?
- Etc.

### **ASSIGNMENT 2: OPTIONS NOTE (7-9 PAGES)**

The second assignment is an “Options Note” to a Minister of Cabinet on the same subject as the previous assignment. Assignment one identifies an issue, introduces any controversies, describes existing government programs, etc. The second assignment suggests some options for the government for reform, to make adjustments to better serve Ontarians, to identify new areas for government activity, to identify areas where government should retreat.

The assignments will be driven by practical problems and the need to understand the constraints that key actors in the political system operate under. **DON’T WORRY! I WILL DISCUSS THE FORMAT FOR EACH ASSIGNMENT IN DETAIL.**

Students are encouraged to use the course as an opportunity to network with Ontario Public Service (OPS) and political officials. You may also want to use this as a venue to test the waters of a career in the civil service, broader public service, NGOs, and municipal government.

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An excellent resource on government/public policy in Ontario is at: [http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/investing/research\\_papers.htm](http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/investing/research_papers.htm). Also, you can check out [www.mowatcentre.ca](http://www.mowatcentre.ca).

NOTE: Two bonus percent will be added to the paper grades of those students who make an effort to interview/reach out to a public servant, a senior figure in civil society or a political figure.

#### *Formatting bibliographies, references*

Cornell University provides useful online guides to the APA and MLA citation styles:

[http://campusgw.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res\\_strategy/citing/apa.html](http://campusgw.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/apa.html)  
[http://campusgw.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res\\_strategy/citing/mla.html](http://campusgw.library.cornell.edu/newhelp/res_strategy/citing/mla.html)

#### *Late assignments*

Late penalties for written assignments: **4 percent per day**. Late papers must be submitted to the Department of Political Science reception, rm. 3018, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Sidney Smith Hall (100 St. George Street).

#### *Extensions and missed tests*

Extensions and make up tests are granted only for documented medical emergencies and severe family crises.

#### *Appeals*

Each appeal must be accompanied by a one-half page explanation of the basis of the appeal. Appeals must be submitted to your TA first (if applicable).

#### *Rough work*

Students are strongly advised to keep rough and draft work and hard copies of their essays and assignments before handing them in to the department. These should be kept until the marked assignments have been returned.

#### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on plagiarism at: [www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html](http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html)

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### *Accessibility Needs*

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodation for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:

[disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

### **EXAM**

There will be an exam scheduled during the examination period.

### **LECTURE SCHEDULE**

**May 16: Introduction + Assignments + The Socio-Economic Setting**

**May 18: The Social and Economic Setting/Ontario's Identity and Political Culture**

- The state of the economy
- Ontario's trade relationships
- Ontario's demographic make up
- The big policy challenges

David Cameron, "Post-Modern Ontario and the Laurentian Thesis" in Douglas M. Brown and Janet Hiebert, eds., *Canada: The State of the Federation 1994*, p. 109 – 132.

<http://www.queensu.ca/iigr/pub/archive/SOTF/SOTF1994.pdf>

**May 23: No class**

**May 25: Ontario's Identity and Political Culture**

- Is there an Ontario identity?
- Is Ontario a region?
- How do Ontarians view themselves?
- Ontario's relationship with the rest of Canada

Matthew Mendelsohn and Scott Matthews, *The New Ontario: The Shifting Attitudes of Ontarians toward the Federation*, Mowat Centre for Policy Innovation, February 2010.

<http://www.mowatcentre.ca/research-topic-mowat.php?mowatResearchID=8>

Murray Campbell, "Ontario: the province that thinks it's Canada." *Globe and Mail*, August 2, 2008. [Available on course website].

**May 30: Machinery of Government: The Executive, Parliament & Civil Service**

- Decision making processes
- Parliamentary structures

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- The Premier`s Office
- The OPS (presentation from Youth&New Professionals Secretariate)
- The Democratic deficit

Graham White, "The Legislature; Central Symbol of Ontario Democracy," in Graham White ed., *The Government and Politics of Ontario*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Donald J. Savoie, *Strengthening the Policy Capacity of Government*, October 2003.  
[http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/investing/research\\_papers.htm](http://www.law-lib.utoronto.ca/investing/research_papers.htm)

**June 1: Fiscal Federalism and the Emergence of Ontario as a Have-Not**

- "From Heartland to Have Not"
- The controversies around federal transfers
- The federal role in Ontario`s economic transformation

Smart, M. (2009). "The Evolution of Federal Transfers since the O'Brien Report." Kingston: John Deutsch Institute Conference.

Lecours, A. and Beland, D. (2010). "Federalism and Fiscal Policy: The Politics of Equalization in Canada." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, pp.1-28--highlights the political, zero-sum nature of debates surrounding Equalization and discusses the challenges of natural resources.

Hjartarson, J. et al (2010). "A Report Card on Canada's Fiscal Arrangements." Toronto: Mowat Centre.

**June 6: The Welfare State in Hard Times**

- Ontario`s welfare state
- Comparisons with Canada – elsewhere
- The federal role
- Income assistance
- Guest Speaker

Keith Banting, "Dis-embedding Liberalism, The New Social Policy Paradigm in Canada" in *Dimensions of Inequality in Canada* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2006).

Recommendations for an Ontario Income Security Review: Report Of The Ontario Social Assistance Review Advisory Council May 2010 (available on the portal).

Jon Medow *et al.*, "Help Wanted: Help Wanted: How Well Did the EI Program Respond During Recent Recessions?" Mowat Centre for Policy Innovation.  
<http://www.mowateitaskforce.ca/sites/default/files/helpwanted.pdf>

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**June 8: Municipal Politics**

- `Creatures of the Provinces`
- The triple deficit
- Provincial-municipal relations

Thomas J. Courchene "Global Futures for Canada's Global Cities", *Policy Matters*, June 2007. <http://www.irpp.org/pm/archive/pmvol8no2.pdf>

Enid Slack and Richard Bird, "Cities in Canadian Federalism," *Policy Options*, January 2008. <http://www.utoronto.ca/mcis/imfg/ArticlesPapersPublications/BirdSlack-Cities%20in%20Canadian%20Federalism-PolicyOptions2008.pdf>

The *Economist*, "The Charms of Calgary, And the Gloom in Toronto, March 18, 2010. [http://www.economist.com/world/americas/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=15726687](http://www.economist.com/world/americas/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15726687)

**June 13: Ontario as a regional actor**

- Ontario's economic integration with the Great Lake states
- Is the Great Lakes a region?
- The Blue Economy
- The border

[http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/0324\\_greatlakes\\_canada\\_austin/greatlakes\\_canada.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2008/0324_greatlakes_canada_austin/greatlakes_canada.pdf)

Additional reading TBD.

**June 15: Ontario's Health Care System**

- Ontario's health system in comparative contrast
- The federal role
- The sustainability versus accessibility debate
- New funding models?

Flood, Colleen, Mark Stabile, and Carolyn Tuohy, "Introduction" in *Exploring Social Insurance: Can a Dose of Europe Cure Canadian Health Care Finance* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008).

Government of Ontario, "Chapter 3: Long-Term Sustainability of Ontario Public Services" in *Ontario's Long-Term Report on the Economy*. (2010). <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/ltr/2010/ch3.html>

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**June 20: Electoral System, Voting and the Democratic Deficit [ISSUE NOTE DUE]**

- Elections and the electoral cycle
- Citizen participation and civil society
- Electoral reform – why it failed and key lessons (Guest speaker)
- Ontario`s democratic deficit
- The upcoming election

Laura B. Stephenson and Brian Tangauy, "Ontario's Referendum on Proportional Representation: Why Citizens Said No." *IRPP Policy Choices*, 15, no. 10 (September 2009). <http://www.irpp.org/choices/archive/vol15no10.pdf>

*Optional Backgrounder:* Celine Mulhern, Graham White and David Cameron, "Democracy in Ontario" <http://www.law-lib.toronto.edu/investing/reports/rp35.pdf>

**June 22: Review**